



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

NOV 30 2009

OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

General Wesley Clark
Co-Chairman
Growth Energy
1900 K Street, N.W.
Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20006

Mr. Jeff Broin
Co-Chairman
Growth Energy
1900 K Street, N.W.
Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear General Clark and Mr. Broin:

It is vitally important that the country increase the use of renewable fuels. To meet that goal EPA is working to implement the long-term renewable fuels mandate of 36 billion gallons by 2022. To achieve the renewable fuel requirements in future years, it is clear that ethanol will need to be blended into gasoline at levels greater than the current limit of 10 percent. To help address this so-called "blend wall" issue, EPA has been evaluating the request from Growth Energy to allow for the use of up to 15 percent ethanol in gasoline (E15). As we have seen in the range of comments from stakeholders, this is a critical issue and also one where there are widely divergent views. A common theme we have heard, however, is that the federal government and other stakeholders are looking to have a successful, long-term introduction of more renewable fuels into the transportation sector.

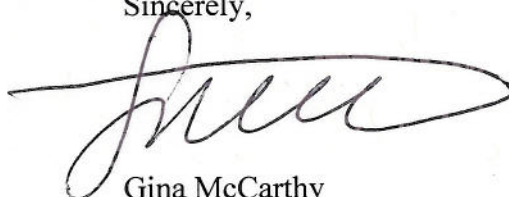
As we are evaluating your E15 waiver petition, we want to make sure we have all necessary science to make the right decision. Although all of the studies have not been completed, our engineering assessment to date indicates that the robust fuel, engine and emissions control systems on newer vehicles (likely 2001 and newer model years) will likely be able to accommodate higher ethanol blends, such as E15. However, we continue to evaluate the question of component durability when E15 is used over many thousands of miles and there is an ongoing study being conducted by DOE that will provide critical data on this issue. We are told by DOE that this program involves the complete testing of 19 vehicles to examine the long term

emissions impacts of higher ethanol blends on newer motor vehicles, and is expected to be completed by August 2010. Presently, data are available on only two vehicles, however it is expected that testing will be completed on an additional 12 vehicles by the end of May. As a result, EPA expects to have a significant amount of the total data being generated through this testing program available to us by mid-June. Should the test results remain supportive and provide the necessary basis, we would be in a position to approve E15 for 2001 and newer vehicles in the mid-year timeframe. Of course, if the data highlight potential problems, then the decision may need to be delayed until all testing is received and reviewed.

In light of the current testing data, the Agency will be taking steps to address fuel pump labeling issues to ensure consumers utilize the proper gasoline for their vehicles and equipment (such as lawn mowers, boats, etc.) should the use of ethanol blends greater than 10 percent be ultimately approved. To that end, we are initiating a process to assess how pump labeling requirements might be extended to fuel distributors. A working group is being pulled together to examine and address labeling issues to allow final labeling requirements to be put in place soon after a waiver decision is made.

In the meantime, we will continue to keep Growth Energy, other stakeholders and the general public informed of the progress and results of the vehicle testing program and the fuel pump labeling evaluation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gina McCarthy', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Gina McCarthy
Assistant Administrator